(e) by when a final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) to (c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. No precise time frame can be indicated at this juncture.

Launching of broad range of media products

584. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) Whether it is a fact that the Walt Disney Company proposes to set up office in India to launch a broad range of media and entertainment products;

(b) Whether this project has been cleared by Government; and

(c) Whether the company would launch Disney Channel for Children in the country, as a pay channel or otherwise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) One of the conditions of the approval given by the Government is that the company would not undertake any Broadcasting from Indian soil unless specifically permitted to do so. The company has not applied so far to uplink from the Indian soil.

New DD news channel

585. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have launched a new DD news channel;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the extent of private software productions to be beamed on this channel and the details thereof like the number of sponsored programmes, names of the production companies, duration of their programmes, the names of the major programmes of those private production units and the salient features of the agreement that have been worked out?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) and (b) Prasar Bharati has informed that a 24 hour News Channel was laucnhed on 3rd November, 2003 which provides free to air round the clock news, which is objective and unbiased, to the public so as to inform and educate them. The channel is available in both the terrestrial and satellite mode. It is the only terrestrial news channel in the country.

(c) The information is placed below as statement.

Statement

Sponsored programmes-approved for DD news channel

SI. No	Programme	Name of the Company	Duration (approximate	Frequency
1.	Rozana	M/s. BAG Films	25-26 mts.	Monday to Friday (five days a week)
2.	Khaberien Bollywood Ki	M/s BAG Films	25-26 mts.	Bi-Weekly Saturday and
3.	Ankhon Dekhi	M/s/ TV Live India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi	25-26 mts.	Monday to Friday (five days a week)
4.	Roving Report	M/s.Asian News Intl, New Delhi	25-26 mts.	Weekly (Saturday)
5.	Fair & Lovely Career Baatein	M/s. NCNL, New Delhi	25-26 mts.	Weekly (Sunday)
6.	Gaon Har Roz •	M/s. News & Views	25-26 mts.	Daily
7.	Bollywood On Line	M/s. Dilip Singh Productions, Delhi	23-24 mts.	Monday to Friday (five days a week)
8.	India This Week	M/s. Moving Co. (India) Ltd., Noida	25-26 mts.	Weekly (Sunday)
9.	Aap Ke Saath Aaj Ki Baat	M/s. Independent News Service Pvt. Ltd.,	25-26 mts.	Monday to Saturday days a week)

Salient features of the agreement

(a) Doordarshan reserves the right to alter/change the day/date/ time of telecast of the above programme in the exigencies of service.

(b) There will no banking/carry forward of Free Commercial Time from the Metro (DD-II) to the News Channel. Also there will be no repeat of programmes.

(c) Bank Guarantee of the value of six episodes telecast fee to Dordarhan Comercial Service.

(d) If there are any outstanding dues with Doordarsan Commercial Service, the same are to be declared as per an approved repayment plan.

(f) Submission of the requisite undertakings and indemnity bond well in advance of the commecement of the programme.

(g) The quality of the programme shall be constantly monitored by Doordarshan and any deterioration in quality shall render the programme liable to be taken off the air without any notice.

Introdcution of set top boxes in Chennai

586. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the set top boxes have been introduced in Chennai; and

(b) if so, the impact thereof indicating the number of units sold and the reduction in the average price paid by the consumers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) and (b) Set Top Boxes are provided by Multi System Operators/cable operators and the Government do not maintain any record in this regard. However, about 12,000 Set Top Boxes are estimated to have been sold/rented out to the Cable TV subscribers in Chennai. The consumers in Chennai appear to be satisfied with the free-to-air channels at a cost of Rs. 72 (plus taxes) being presently received for which no STB is required. Moreover, some popular pay channels have switched over to free-to-air category, in Chennai.